

SUPERFUND

Fact Sheet

PALERMO WELLFIELD Tumwater, Washington



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

February 2001

In January 2001, EPA finished work at the Palermo site which was listed on the Superfund National Priorities List in April 1997. This cleanup reduced contaminants in groundwater and indoor air, which previously posed a health risk to residents.

Construction Completed!

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finished building the subdrain and treatment lagoon system, the final cleanup project for the Palermo Wellfield Superfund site. This new system will lower groundwater, which contains the chemicals tetrachloroethylene (PCE) and trichloroethylene (TCE), in the Palermo neighborhood. The contaminated groundwater, which collected in the crawl spaces under some homes, was believed to put the health of residents at risk, as the contaminants evaporated and seeped into the homes above. The EPA, its contractors, and the Washington State Department of Ecology conducted a final inspection of the project on January 30, 2001 and determined that the construction project has been successfully completed.

Alert: Do Not Dig New Wells

In order to ensure that no one inadvertently uses the contaminated groundwater, EPA is asking you not to drill new supply wells within the area of contamination - depicted in Figure 1. For more detailed information about the location of the contaminated groundwater, please contact Bob Kievit at (360) 753-9014 or e-mail kievit.bob@epa.gov.

Sign Up for Air Sampling

To ensure that the project is effective and that residents of the Palermo neighborhood are not exposed to unhealthy levels of PCE or TCE, EPA is planning to sample the indoor air in homes along Rainier Avenue, where the highest groundwater contaminant levels were found. EPA will also sample other homes in the neighborhood if requested by the residents. If your house is located in the area where EPA found the highest groundwater contaminant levels, a letter is enclosed with this fact sheet describing the air sampling program in more detail. Sampling is tentatively scheduled for March and August 2001.

Next Step - Operation and Maintenance

EPA will maintain and test the subdrain/treatment lagoon system for the next 12 months to ensure that the remedy is working correctly. During this time the EPA contractors (URS Corporation) will be on site for about two days each month to monitor groundwater levels, flows through the system, and the discharge from the lagoon. When EPA determines that the system is continuing to work effectively, we will turn over the responsibility for monitoring and maintenance to the Washington State Department of Ecology.

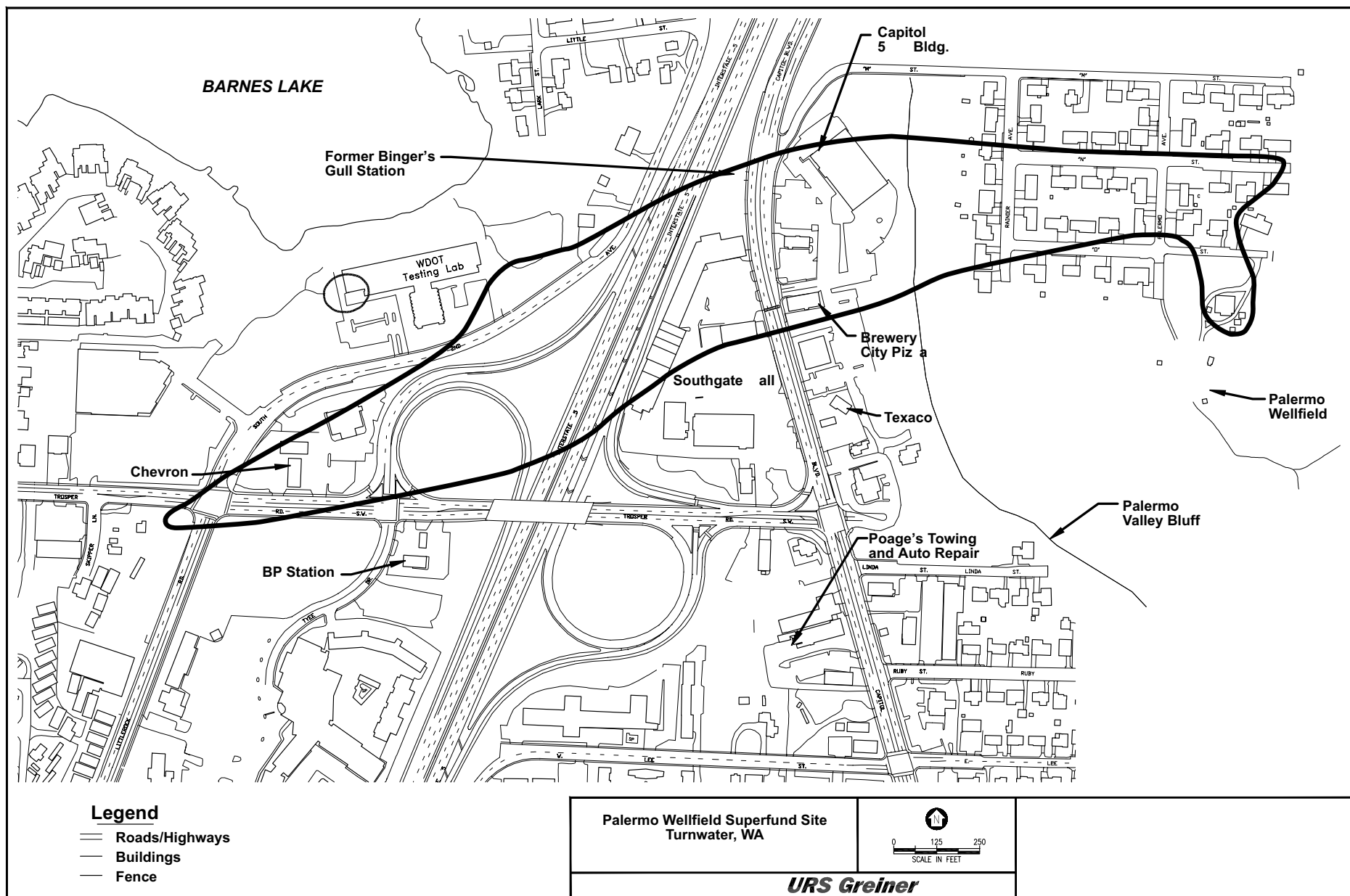


Figure 1: Outline of groundwater contamination trichloroethylene (TCE) plume at Palermo site. This indicates where TCE was found in concentrations greater than 5 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/l}$) -- the cleanup goal.

Background

The Palermo Wellfield, located just east of Interstate 5 near the intersection of Trosper Road and Capitol Boulevard, consists of six wells that provide up to 50% of the drinking water for the City of Tumwater. In 1993, routine sampling detected the solvent trichloroethylene (TCE) in three of the water supply wells, which were then removed from service.

The Palermo Wellfield site was added to EPA's National Priorities List (NPL) of contaminated sites identified for potential long-term cleanup on April 1, 1997. EPA investigations revealed that TCE as well as tetrachloroethylene (PCE) contamination originated from several businesses in the commercial area near Interstate 5 (I-5) and Trosper Road. The contaminants seeped down through the soils to the groundwater and moved with the groundwater as it flowed eastward towards the city wellfield.

In response, EPA cleaned up contaminated soils under a dry-cleaner at Southgate Shopping Center, built a water treatment system at the city wellfield, and built the subdrain and lagoon system in the Palermo neighborhood. The three affected city wells were reopened in 1999, after the water treatment system was constructed.

About the Contaminants

TCE and PCE are common chlorinated organic solvents that are used for metal degreasing, solvent extraction, dry cleaning, and as a

fumigant. TCE and PCE belong to a family of chemicals known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which move easily through the environment and may be harmful to people who are exposed to them. Potential health problems from exposure depend on a variety of things, including how the chemical entered the body, how long and how often a person has been exposed, and how sensitive a person is to its effect.

For More Information

Documents concerning the site are available for your review at:

Tumwater Public Library,
7023 New Market Street, and
EPA's Washington Operation Office,
300 Desmond Drive SE in Lacey.

If you have questions, please contact:

Robert Kievit, EPA Remedial Project Manager
at (360) 753-9014
Debra Packard, EPA Community Involvement
Coordinator
at (206)553-0247

Information on this site can also be found on
the EPA Region 10 InfoPage:
<http://www.epa.gov/r10/earth>.

EPA can also be reached by calling toll-free:
1-800-424-4372

To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with disabilities by contacting one of the numbers listed above.



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